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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 2007

#### In Today's Papers

##### Dink Murderer Indicted, Funeral Aftermath

All papers report Istanbul's chief prosecutor Aykut Cengiz Engin said five people including Ogun Samast and Yasin Hayal were indicted regarding the killing of Turkish Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, on charges of "forming an armed organization" and "inciting to murder."

Hayal, handcuffed under heavy security, shouted "Orhan Pamuk should be careful" as he was taken to an Istanbul court house for the killing of Dink on Friday. Hayal has admitted to inciting his friend Ogun Samast, 17, to kill Dink. Hayal had served 11 months in jail for the 2004 bombing of a McDonald's restaurant in his Black Sea home town of Trabzon. Radikal says although the prosecutor said the suspects were part of an illegal network, Trabzon governor said the murder was committed by "amateurs," and that there was no organization behind the murderers.

Several papers point to the positive international press coverage regarding the display of unity at the Dink funeral on Tuesday. Under the headline, "This Time World Media Applauds," Yeni Safak says international media strongly criticized Turkey for the murder, but "applauded the social and political response" at the funeral, writing that the threat to Turkey isn't Islamists but nationalists.

Devlet Bahceli, chairman of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) criticized yesterday the nation for not reacting to the killing of Turkish soldiers in the fight against the PKK, but for chanting slogans at the Dink funeral such as "We all are Armenians." Bahceli said such slogans were an "anomaly." Papers report the Dink family lawyer said that a day after the murder, Agos newspaper received an email from the Turkish Revenge Brigade threatening that more killings would come.

Milliyet reports that Assistant Secretary Dan Fried told a memorial service for Dink organized by the Armenian Assembly of America in Washington that the "evil in the world can be measured by the

hate-filled nationalist" who killed Dink but "the hope in the world can be measured by the tens of thousand of Armenians, Turks and Greeks who filled the streets" in his memory.

Armenian deputy Foreign Minister Arman Kirakosian said yesterday after paying a condolence visit to the Dink family that Armenia was ready to establish diplomatic ties with Turkey without preconditions. He said that he was deeply impressed with people's commiseration during the funeral without discrimination. Sabah reports Turkish officials told Kirakosian there was no hostility toward Armenia in Turkey, calling on Yerevan to try to change Armenian diaspora's negative approach toward Turkey. Prime Minister Erdogan too offered his condolences to the Dink family and to Mesrob II, the Patriarch of the Armenians in Turkey.

Ismail Cem Dies

All papers report former Turkish foreign minister Ismail Cem, who engineered a big thaw in Turkey's ties with Greece, died of lung cancer on Wednesday aged 66. A "refined" social democrat fluent in English and French, Cem served as foreign minister from 1997 to 2002 and secured Ankara's status as a European Union candidate in 1999.

With his personal friend Greek foreign minister George Papandreou, Cem worked hard to defuse strains in the Aegean, where a few years earlier Ankara and Athens had come to the brink of war over the uninhabited Kardak (Imia) islets. In 2002, Cem and Papandreou were jointly named Best Statesman of the Year 2000 for their efforts for bolstering Turkey-Greek ties. "The news of Ismail Cem's death brought great sorrow to us who had the privilege to meet personally the visionary politician and share with him the faith for a steady improvement of Greek-Turkish ties," Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyanni said in a statement. President Sezer said Cem's services and contributions to foreign policy would always be remembered with

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appreciation. Cem will be buried on Friday.

Gul Signals Changes to Article 301

Hurriyet, Sabah, Radikal, Zaman and others report Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul said on Wednesday he supported calls for changes to Turkish penal code Article 301, related to freedom of expression and seen by many as contributing to the murder of prominent Armenian editor Hrant Dink. "There are some problems with the current state of Article 301; we recognize the need for making some changes to it.

We want expression of all kinds of thoughts freely which do not include violence or incitement" Gul said at a press briefing.

Meanwhile, Hurriyet and Radikal report a court sentenced Ibrahim Guclu, spokesman of the Diyarbakir Kurdish Association (Kurd-Der) to 18 months in prison for "publicly insulting Turkishness and the Turkish Republic" in violation of Article 301 in a press statement he had issued in August 2005 with regard to an incident that had occurred in the eastern province of Van in 1943, during which 33 Kurds were killed.

Kurdistan Regional Parliament's Extraordinary Session on Kirkuk  
Milliyet, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others report Kurdistan regional parliament in northern Iraq held an extraordinary session to discuss ties with Turkey following the Turkish parliament's secret session on developments in Iraq. Meanwhile, Kurdistan

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parliament Speaker Adnan Mufti chaired the extraordinary meeting. Kurdistan Region Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani praised the 15-year relationship between the Kurdistan Region and Turkey. He pointed out that neither Turkey nor any other country can deploy troops in Kurdistan because, as he said, the issue was more sensitive than Turkish media's portrayal. He said a military incursion into northern Iraq would damage Turkey.

Editorial Commentary on Northern Iraq, Anti-Americanism

Sahin Alpay argues in the Islamist-oriented intellectual Zaman that in northern Iraq Turkey's "most effective power is not armed force but gentle force": "Speculation about Turkish military intervention in Iraq has intensified recently. According to the speculation the intervention has many aims: eliminating the PKK in Northern Iraq, preventing Kirkuk from turning into a Kurdish province, preventing

Iraqi Kurds from becoming an example for Turkish Kurds in their fight for independence, preventing Iraq's disintegration, which would damage the stability in the Middle East. Ankara might be right in wanting Kirkuk oil to be used by all Iraqis and in support of Iraq's integrity. Ankara could do whatever it can to reach these targets, through diplomatic means. However, in the end, Iraqis will be the only ones to decide on Iraq's future. The most effective way for Turkey to prevent Northern Iraq from becoming a base for the PKK and also to protect Turkmen minority rights in Northern Iraq, is to gain Iraqi Kurds trust and friendship. Turkey's most effective power is not armed force but gentle force. To be able to protect its integrity and security, Turkey, first of all, should strengthen its democracy internally and should be loyal to diplomatic and peaceful methods abroad."

Murat Celik observes in the tabloid Bugun that anti-Americanism is not unique to Turkey: "There are so many commentaries in Turkey lately implying that only Turks have anti-American sentiments. Recently, British BBC-TV conducted a survey in 25 countries, surveying 26,000 people. The question was "Is the US influence in the world positive or negative?" Sixty-nine percent of people in Turkey said it was negative, along with 74 percent in Germany, 71 percent in Indonesia, 69 percent in France and 57 percent in the UK who also said it was negative. Only 7 percent in Turkey believe that it is positive. One other important question of the survey was about US Iraq policy. Ninety percent of Turks, 94 percent of French, 82 percent of Russians and 81 percent of British people believed that the US Iraq policy was wrong. The result of the survey is very clear: Half of the world believes that the US is harmful to the world. So, let us all remember that when you hear a

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comment starting by saying 'anti-Americanism is increasing in Turkey', this situation does not apply to Turkey only."

TV Highlights  
NTV, 6.00 A.M.

#### Domestic News

- The Turkish Finance Ministry reportedly launched an investigation into unauthorized inquiries in affiliate tax offices regarding the wealth and possessions of top state officials such as President Sezer, Prime Minister Erdogan and the Chief of the General Staff General Buyukanit.
- Geoff Hoon, the British Minister for Europe, said Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code should be changed or abolished.
- EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn said isolation of prisoners held in high security prisons remained a serious problem in Turkey.
- Former IMF President Fischer said Turkey needs further cooperation with the IMF to cope with possible economic turmoil.

#### International News

- The European Court of Human Rights has accepted to investigate an application that had been submitted by slain journalist Hrant Dink against a Turkish court ruling penalizing him for "insulting Turkishness."
- Greek Prime Minister Karamanlis told the Council of Europe's parliamentary assembly that a divided Cyprus remains one of the last hurdles on the way toward the reunification of Europe.
- Israeli Foreign Minister Livni called on President Katsav to resign in the face of increasing charges of rape and abuse of power.
- An armed hijacker diverting a Sudanese airliner to neighboring Chad has been arrested and the passengers are released unharmed.  
<http://www.state.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

